

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 2947

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, DPC

SUBJ: DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING MAY 23, 1975: RESTRICTED SESSION:
AGENDA ITEM IV; PRESS LEAK CONCERNING MILITARY FACILITIES
IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. THE RESTRICTED SESSION MAY 23 OPENED WITH A STATEMENT BY MOD LEBER, WHO CRITICIZED DUTCH MOD VREDELING FOR HAVING LEAKED PART OF THE DISCUSSION OF MINISTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS AFTER-NOON'S SESSION. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD NOW HAVE "GRAVE HESITATION" ABOUT SPEAKING FREELY IN RESTRICTED SESSIONS IF STATEMENTS WHICH ARE INTENDED TO BE MADE AMONG FRIENDS ARE SUBSEQUENTLY PUT INTO THE PRESS. HE CLARIFIED HIS COMPLAINT BY EXPLAINING THAT HE HAD ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT TO BE A REASONABLE QUESTION IN THAT SESSION AS TO WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE AVAILABLE ABOUT MILITARY FACILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA. TODAY, HE SAID, HE READ IN THE PAPERS THAT THE DUTCH MOD HAD TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE NETHERLANDS WOULD LEAVE NATO IF NATO ESTABLISHED BASES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

2. SECRETARY LUNS UNDERSCORED THE SERIOUSNESS OF LEBER'S CHARGE AND CALLED IT THE "GROSSEST BREACH" OF CONFIDENCE. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS A HEADLINE IN THE LARGEST DUTCH PAPER THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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MORNING TO THE EFFECT THAT A BITTER CONFLICT HAD OCCURED IN THE DPC BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND THE U.S. ABOUT THE U.S. ESTABLISHING "NATO BASES IN SOUTH AFRICA." LUNS SUGGESTED THAT POSSIBLY VREDELING HAD NOT ACTUALLY MADE SUCH A STATEMENT AND

THAT PERHAPS AN ANSWER TO A PRESS QUESTION MAY HAVE BEEN MIS-INTERPRETED.

3. AT THIS POINT VREDELING ARRIVED AT THE MEETING, WAS INFORMED OF THE THRUST OF THE DISCUSSION BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THEN MADE A STATEMENT ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

AFTER EACH DPC SESSION, IT IS NORMAL FOR HIM TO BE CONTACTED BY THE DUTCH PRESS AND TELEVISION. IN SUCH INTERVIEWS HE NORMALLY TELLS THE PRESS WHAT HE HAS DONE IN THE MEETING, BUT NOT WHAT HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE DONE; HE GIVES THE DUTCH POINT OF VIEW OF WHAT TRANSPIRED IN THE MEETING. REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO WHAT HAD APPEARED IN THE DUTCH NEWSPAPER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD MADE A STATEMENT THAT TOUCHED ON FACILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, INDICATING THAT THE MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION HAD BEEN WIDE RANGING, COVERING MANY AREAS OF THE WORLD, BUT THAT THE STATEMENT HE GAVE WAS MUCH MORE CONSTRAINED THAN THE PRESS REPORTED. HE SAID THAT, AS A POLITICAL PERSON, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO TO ANSWER QUESTIONS PUT TO HIM BY PRESS REPRESENTATIVES.

4. AFTER SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS UNDERLINED THE PROBABILITY THAT MINISTERS' REPORTING TO PRESS ON RESTRICTED SESSIONS OF NATO MINISTERIAL MEETINGS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN DOMESTIC POLITICAL ADVANTAGE WOULD DISCOURAGE FURTHER FREE EXCHANGES OF VIEWS, THEREBY DIMINISHING THE VALUE OF SUCH SESSIONS IN FUTURE, MINISTERS TURNED TO A DISCUSSION OF THE REFERENCE TO SPAIN IN THE COMMUNIQUE (SEPTTEL). BRUCE

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